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Editorial

Resist fascist violence and repression

More organizations and individuals locally and abroad are condemning the unabated campaign of political killings against members and leaders of progressive organizations. But Gloria Arroyo mocks them by intensifying fascist killings and attacks against the people while hypocritically declaring her innocence and proclaiming that democracy continues to prevail in the country.

Aside from the numerous political assassinations, military death squads particularly targeted over the past weeks those who assisted and testified last February in an investigation of the killings conducted by the United Nations. Barely two weeks after the departure of a mission led by UN Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial Executions Prof. Philip Alston, Renato Torrecampo Pacaide, a peasant leader who facilitated a meeting between the mission and witnesses as well as several victims' relatives, was himself killed in Digos City. Eight days later, the military killed Siche Gandinao, a peasant leader who testified against the AFP in the said investigation. The military threatened to kill next another witness, Siche's sister Divina.

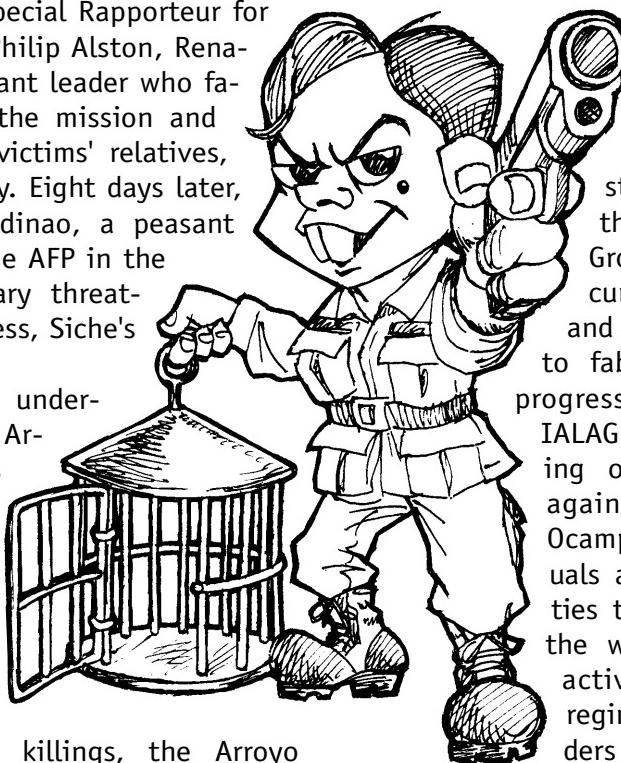
The killing of witnesses underscores the ruthlessness of the Arroyo regime's fascist leaders and minions who desperately want to exterminate the forces most determined in exposing and condemning the regime's fascist and other heinous crimes committed against the nation.

Alongside the continuing killings, the Arroyo

regime is intensifying and hastening the implementation of a parallel tactic of employing dirty "legal" and extralegal methods consisting of slander, harassment and repression against progressive parties, organizations and their leaders.

The intention is to exclude them from the legal and parliamentary arenas, deny them legal status and the opportunity to effectively reach out and influence the people, and feed them to the state's fascist ogres. The regime is now obsessed with the progressive parties Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela Women's Party, especially since they are expected to win additional congressional seats.

Malacañang is terrified of the emergence in Congress of a significant progressive bloc that can combine with other anti-Arroyo forces to form a strong opposition. It has formed the Inter-Agency Legal Action Group (IALAG) under National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to fabricate criminal cases against progressive parties and individuals. IALAG is now busy hastening the filing of fabricated criminal charges against Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and other prominent individuals and leaders of progressive parties to shift to them the blame for the widespread political killings of activists and thus absolve the regime and its butchers. Upon orders from Malacañang, it has con-



This issue's highlights...

Militarization in Metro Manila

PAGE 4

Harassment of progressive forces intensifies

PAGE 4

Malacañang planned to feed Ka Satur to lynch mob in Leyte

PAGE 5

cocted incredible stories and filed trumped-up criminal charges based on the discovery of so-called mass graves of suspected military agents allegedly killed by the NPA.

The false criminal charges filed against Ocampo and 51 others allegedly linked to the NPA purge in Leyte more than two decades ago is but one of the more than 1,500 criminal cases being prepared by the IALAG against progressive parties.

This is part of the Arroyo regime's plan to eventually declare progressive organizations illegal and brand them as fronts for the Communist Party of the Philippines. To facilitate this, Malacañang intends to use the fascist Anti-Terror Law as soon as it becomes effective in July. Thus, even if the progressive parties win numerous Congressional seats, the regime may use the "terrorist" label to boot them all out of Congress, the same way representatives of the Democratic Alliance were expelled in 1950.

But this will not be an easy task as the progressive forces and the people will strongly resist the much despised, thoroughly brutal, repressive and scheming regime.

The Filipino people are already showing a high level of determination and militancy and are courageously resisting the regime's outright use of all the powers of the fascist state. They tirelessly expose every lie and relentlessly fight against each and every nefarious scheme, each dirty tactic, each manipulation of the law and each fascist crime of the Arroyo regime.

For its part, the armed revolutionary movement will intensify tactical offensives throughout the country to defend the people, punish fascist criminals, contribute to the quicker overthrow of the Arroyo regime and further advance the Philippine revolution. AB

Arroyo regime isolated internationally

The Arroyo regime is fast becoming isolated internationally in much the same way as the Marcos dictatorship and other previous fascist regimes, due to the exposure of its fascist crimes. Arroyo is losing more allies even as more organizations, government officials and prominent personalities have been expressing concern if not outrightly condemning her dictatorship. She is now ranked with such historically reviled dictators worldwide like Marcos and Pinochet. Her regime's international isolation is an important victory for the Filipino people.

US Senate hearing. Marking a significant turn in the Arroyo regime's isolation, the US Senate Committee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs held a hearing last March 14 on extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. Led by anti-Bush senator and Democratic Party Assistant Majority Leader Barbara Boxer, the investigation was conducted at the behest of various US-based Filipino-American, religious and progressive organizations.

Among those who testified in the hearing were United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) secretary-general Bishop Eliezer Pascua; Karapatan secretary-general Marie Hilao-Enriquez; and an official from Amnesty International (AI). Senator Boxer's committee also accepted UN Special Rapporteur on Extra-judicial Executions Prof. Philip Alston's preliminary report. Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo sent a videotaped testimony, having failed to appear due to a court issued warrant for his arrest.

Witnesses testified on the large number of political killings, including the murder of 25 UCCP clergy, as well as more than 129 members of Bayan Muna. They pointed to elements of the Philippine military as the perpetrators in the killings of hundreds of activists. Ocampo decried the Arroyo regime's policy of making no distinctions in at-



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Contents

Editorial	
Resist fascist violence and repression	1
Arroyo regime isolated internationally	2
Fascist state on a rampage	
Militarization in Metro Manila	4
Harassment of progressive forces intensifies	4
Malacañang planned to feed	
Ka Satur to lynch mob in Leyte	5
Death squad silences witness in Alston investigation	6
News	6

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tacking both armed and unarmed groups and its classification of Bayan Muna and other progressive parties and organizations as communist fronts. He pointed to this as the underlying reason for the unabated killings and harassment of Bayan Muna activists, including their Congressional representatives.

In response, Senator Boxer called on the State Department to review US financial aid to the Philippines to determine if American taxpayers' money was being used to further political killings and human rights violations in the Philippines.

Although uninvited, the Arroyo regime sent over police officials led by PNP Deputy Dir. Gen. Avelino Razon Jr. who also chaired Task Force Usig and Dir. Edgardo Doromal of the Criminal Investigation & Detection Group (CIDG). Senator Boxer slammed the Arroyo government for sending the uninvited police officers whose presence could intimidate witnesses.

UN Special Rapporteur calls for scrapping of Anti-Terror Law. A few days before the hearing, Prof. Martin Scheinin, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism called for the scrapping of the anti-terror law which he said violates international laws and human rights standards.

In a statement, Professor Scheinin pointed out that the provisions of the Human Security Act (HSA) directly violate the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (IC-

CPR) and are not in accordance with international human rights standards. He specified the HSA's overly generalized definition of what constitutes "acts of terrorism," saying this was diametrically opposed to Article 15 of the ICCPR.

Professor Scheinin moreover said that imposing a 40-year jail term no matter the gravity of the offense may be excessive in many instances. He also questioned the competence and impartiality of agencies tasked with looking into the cases of detained suspects as these agencies were all part of the executive branch. He said this was violative of Article 9 of the ICCPR which states that such powers must be vested in the judiciary.

He decried provisions curtailing suspects' right to travel even in cases where there was lack of conclusive evidence of their having committed a criminal act.

It will be recalled that before Professor Scheinin released his statement, Philip Alston, the UN's Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions had already released a preliminary report that pointed to the entire Philippine military establishment as the perpetrator of the killings of activists. The UNHRC Special Rapporteur for enforced disappearances is also being invited to conduct an investigation in the Philippines on the numerous abduction cases perpetrated by the state's armed forces.

In New Zealand and the European Union. Meanwhile, prominent New Zealand personality Prof. Jane Kelsey has written Prime Minister Helen Clark requesting her to talk to Gloria Arroyo regarding human rights violations in the Philippines. It will be recalled that Prime Minister Clark expressed her concern about human rights abuses

during her Philippine visit last year. Professor Kelsey, however, said that Arroyo's assurances to Clark that violations would be looked into turned out to be meaningless. She has asked Prime Minister Clark to speak to Arroyo again to demand a stop to political killings and the detention of progressive activists.

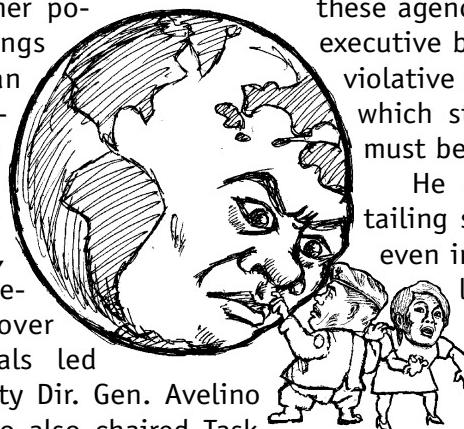
Meanwhile, the European Commission, as well as governments and parliaments in Canada, Belgium, Finland, New Zealand and many church organizations in various parts of the world have condemned state violence and are planning to conduct investigations on the Arroyo regime's repression of progressive forces and the people.

Permanent People's Tribunal.

The second session of the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) where charges had earlier been filed against the Arroyo regime is slated to start in a few days. Among the cases to be heard by the PPT are those on political killings and human rights violations. The Alston Mission is also set to submit a report to the PPT aside from its report to the UNCHR.

International Parliamentary Union. Delegates from the International Parliamentary Union will visit the country anew this May to investigate the continuing detention of Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran and look into the nature of the charges filed against Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo.

ALRC. The Asian Legal Resource Center (ALRC) has assailed the Philippine judiciary system for being rotten due to the inutility of the police and courts to investigate and solve cases of human rights violations. The ALRC, which released a 192-page report on the Philippine judicial system, is an organization of lawyers based in Hong Kong. AB





Militarization in Metro Manila

Urban poor residents in Metro Manila have strongly denounced the militarization of their communities and the harassment of leaders and members of progressive parties. The AFP could ill conceal its sinister intent in deploying its soldiers even if the troops now sport office uniforms instead of combat fatigues.

Residents and clergy in Tondo are demanding the pullout of Special Operations Teams (SOT) that have been deployed in the area since November. The soldiers have been banning the residents from attending protest actions and are actively campaigning against progressive parties.

Last March 12, the Kabataan Party started a campaign to solicit one million signatures against military presence in Metro Manila schools and barangays.

The Kabataan Party condemned military surveillance and harassment of youth leaders. In all school forums sponsored by the AFP, the soldiers were bravely faced by students who belied the military's slanderous claims against progressive organizations.

According to NCR Command chief Brig. Gen. Delfin Dolorfino, the AFP is likewise planning to deploy SOT in Moro communities in Metro Manila. He said they will be visiting mosques to "dialogue" with the people, just as they have been doing in Metro Manila schools where they have been slandering progressive parties and terrorizing students from joining militant organizations. AB

Harassment of progressive forces intensifies

The repression and harassment of candidates and members of progressive parties are intensifying as the May election draws near.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo was arrested by Philippine National Police (PNP) elements last March 16 on trumped-up murder charges filed in Leyte against him, Prof. Jose Ma. Sison and 50 others. Ocampo was arrested right after he filed a petition at the Supreme Court to question the validity of the case filed against him and to present evidence that would exonerate him.

The court ordered that he be kept in the temporary custody of the PNP National Capital Region while awaiting the Supreme Court's decision on his petition. Despite this, he was dragged into an airplane bound for Leyte at dawn of March 19, with the police claiming that it had not yet received any official court order that Ocampo be detained in Manila. Halfway through the flight, the PNP had to return Ocampo to Manila after receiving a written order from the Leyte court stating

that he no longer had to be brought there.

Aside from the legal obstacles, the regime suddenly faced greater political problems after various sectors condemned the Arroyo government's harsh moves against Ocampo.

It was Malacañang's Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COCIS) and Inter-Agency Legal Action Group (IALAG) that were behind the filing of murder charges against Ocampo and 51 others. Ocampo is being accused of ordering the killing of people whose skeletal remains had been dug up from an alleged mass grave in Sapang Daku, Barangay Caulisan, Inopacan, Leyte. The AFP claims that the exhumed remains are those of victims of an internal purge by the New People's Army.

Professor Sison has strongly condemned the Arroyo regime for filing the manufactured murder case against him and his co-accused. He said the Arroyo regime is merely using the falsified charges to cover up the worsening extrajudicial killings in the country.

Sison and Ocampo stressed that they were detained in a maximum security military jail at the time the killings allegedly happened. In his petition, Ocampo branded the military's accusations against him a pack of lies especially since five of the skeletal





remains that were being presented as evidence against him in Inopacan, Leyte were also allegedly dug up by the military in Barangay Monterico, Baybay, Leyte in 2002. He accused AFP chief-of-staff Hermogenes Esperon of transferring skeletons from one place to another.

Ocampo added that the fiscal in charge of the case in Baybay is also in charge of the case in Inopacan, and the same witness is being used in both cases. The witness, however, made no mention of Ocampo in 2002.

According to Inopacan residents recently interviewed by *Ang Bayan*, the area the military has dug up is an ordinary cemetery and not a mass grave of victims of a purge. The AFP has been terrorizing residents to prevent them from revealing the truth. In fact, many residents have already fled the community in fear.

The Mt. Amandewin Command of the NPA in Leyte has moreover said that the military's witness Zacarias Piedad is a former NPA member who was expelled for treason and serious violations of NPA regulations. He was later involved in numerous criminal activities and was imprisoned for robbery. He was then recruited by the AFP into the CAFGU and became a paid military agent. Even while he was with the NPA, he was not even assigned to the Inopacan area during the time he claimed to have witnessed Ocampo order the killings.

Meanwhile, progressive parties have reported stepped up surveillance of their offices even as Ocampo was being subjected to intensifying harassment. For several days,

PNP and CIDG elements have been keeping close watch over the offices of the Kilusang Mayo Uno, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Anakpawis and other organizations. The surveillance teams were usually aboard vehicles and taking pictures of these offices.

The AFP likewise harassed members of the Samahang Magsasaka sa Batangas-KMP who were campaigning in Batangas City.

Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano has denounced the harassment against their party. He accused Malacañang and the AFP of hounding the

legal movement, with their fascist attacks consisting of filing disqualification cases, killings and repression. Saying that Arroyo's incessant attacks against the people evoked memories of the martial law era, Mariano vowed that Anakpawis will



resist and foil these attacks.

In Iloilo City, militant organizations condemned an attempt by the Arroyo regime's minions to burn down an office in Barangay Sto. Niño Sur, Arevalo District where streamers, posters and other campaign materials of Bayan Muna (BM), Gabriela Women's Party, Anakpawis and Kabataan Party were being prepared. Men on motorcycles hurled molotov bombs at the office during the early hours of March 18, partially burning the roof.

BM, Anakpawis and Gabriela Women's Party all lead the latest surveys by the SWS and Pulse Asia. These surveys show that the three leading parties will surpass their gains in the 2001 election and can each win a maximum of three congressional seats. On the other hand, the Pulse Asia survey reveals that the Kabataan Party may be one of the new parties that would most likely win a seat in the party-list elections.

AB

Malacañang planned to feed Ka Satur to lynch mob in Leyte

A gang of paid vigilantes was waiting to mob and humiliate Ka Satur Ocampo in Hilongos, Leyte last March 19.

According to reports, a day before the congressman was to be brought to Leyte, teams of soldiers plastered the town with posters vilifying him and a van drove around broadcasting slanderous statements against him. This was all part of Malacañang's sinister plan to create conditions for Ka Satur's mauling by a lynch mob of "irate residents". In reality, the AFP mobilized groups of anti-communist vigilantes to manhandle Ka Satur as soon as he arrived in Hilongos. The plan was to make it appear that the PNP lost control and failed to protect Ka Satur from a mob of angry locals.

Malacañang was rushing to implement its dastardly scheme before the arrival of a court order for Ka Satur's temporary detention in Manila. The written court order eventually arrived while Ka Satur was being flown to Leyte as various sectors denounced his inhuman treatment. Malacañang had no other choice but to shelve the plan and order that Ka Satur be brought back to Manila.

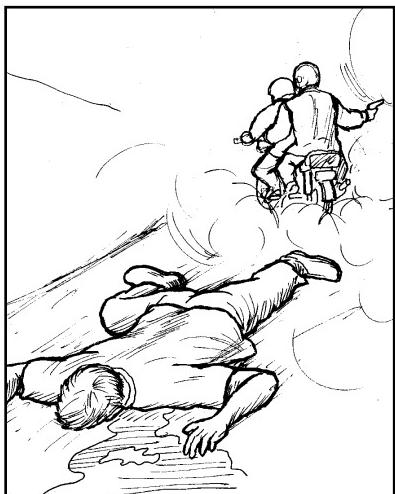
AB



Death squad silences witness in Alston investigation

The brutal killing of a witness from Misamis Oriental who testified against the AFP before the Alston Mission's investigation on extrajudicial killings is the worst in the latest cases of military atrocities documented by *Ang Bayan* from the latter part of February to the early March.

March 13. Four men killed Bayan Muna member Carlito Getrosa, 49, in Barangay Midpapan, Pigcawayan, North Cotabato. He was gunned down inside his home in front of his family and friends. The assailants all wore masks and combat boots and fled aboard two motorcycles.



husband and daughter, and sustained four gunshot wounds in the head and body.

The killing took place less than a month after she testified before Prof. Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Gandinao was an eyewitness to the killing last February 8 of her husband's uncle Dalmacio "Tatay Daki" Gandinao, MOFA head and Bayan Muna provincial coordinator for Misamis Oriental. Siche and Tatay Daki were both active in the campaign against militarization and human rights abuses in their community.

Elda, the victim's daughter, said that she saw the killer follow them on a motorcycle as soon as they passed the detachment. The killer fled towards the detachment after the shooting. When Elda cried for

March 10. Siche Bustamante-Gandinao, 56, member of the Misamis Oriental Farmers Association (MOFA) and Bayan Muna, was shot to death a few yards from the 9th IB detachment in Sitio Nabuolan, Barangay Guinalaban, Salay, Misamis Oriental. She was shot while walking home with her

All systems go for electoral fraud

THE old Comelec building in Manila was razed to the ground in the early hours of March 11, turning volumes of important documents to ash. The burnt documents included ballots that would have served as evidence of electoral fraud in 2004 and verification papers of groups intending to join this year's party-list election.



It is highly suspicious that firefighters who were stationed only a block away did not immediately respond to the fire. The fire had already been raging for some time when the firefighters arrived at the scene. According to the fire station commander, it rarely happens that a fire that breaks out in the area is not immediately reported to them.

The unexplained departure of Marines guarding the building a few minutes before the blaze bolsters public belief that the fire was started by government personnel. Aside from the possibility that this may be part of Malacañang's attempt to cover up electoral fraud in 2004, it might also be a step towards the cancellation of the May election, where many of Gloria Arroyo's enemies are expected to win.

A week before the fire, three employees of the National Printing Office (NPO) were caught copying the serial numbers of ballots intended for the coming election in a move believed to be part of the preparations for the printing of bogus ballots to be used in electoral fraud.

The NPO, the official printer of all election documents, is headed by Felipe Evardone who is facing several graft cases in his office. He is the brother of Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone who now serves as campaign manager for the Arroyo administration's TEAM Unity. Ben Evardone's appointment also forms part of the preparations to cheat in the coming

help, another motorcycle stopped beside them and later went to the detachment. Both motorcycles, one with the killer on board, drove back to the crime

Continued on "Death squad...," on page 7

3.4 million families hungry-SWS

UP to 19% or 3.4 million Filipino families experienced hunger in the past three months, according to a Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey conducted last February 24-27. This is the highest hunger incidence registered by the SWS since 1998.

Hunger is worst in Metro Manila where the number of hungry families increased from 17.7% in November 2006 to 20.7% this February. The numbers also increased from 17.7% to 18.3% in other parts of Luzon.

Instead of tackling the worsening hunger problem, Gloria Arroyo had the gall to announce that the growing number of hungry families is caused by the people's expenses on non-essentials such as cellphones, alcoholic beverages and cigarettes.

Philippines is most corrupt country in Asia

THE Philippines is now the most corrupt among 13 Asian countries surveyed by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC), according to its March 13 report. The Philippines has overtaken Indonesia by leaps and bounds. Indonesia is now tied with Thailand in second place. The PERC survey confirms earlier reports about widespread corruption in the Arroyo regime and the bogusness of its campaign against corruption funded to the tune of ₱2 billion.

The PERC survey was held from January to February and covered 1,400 foreign investors in Asia. Most of the respondents said that corruption in the Philippines has worsened despite the Arroyo regime's repeated claims that it is eradicating the problem.

"Death squad...," from page 6

scene.

The regime filed sham charges of negligence against two CAFGU personnel and a soldier who were then assigned to the detachment for their failure to respond to Elda's cries for help.

Siche Gandinao is the second of those who assisted in the Alston investigation to be killed. AB earlier reported the killing last March 2 of Renato Torrecampo Pacaide, secretary general of the Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Davao del Sur and Anakpawis provincial coordinator. Pacaide facilitated a meeting between the Alston Mission and sev-

eral witnesses of extrajudicial killings.

March 2. A gunman shot and killed Bayan Muna municipal coordinator Felisa Ocampo, 59, in Morong, Bataan. She was shot at 7:30 a.m. in front of her sister's store. Witnesses said the killer escaped aboard a car with three other men on board. The car was tailed by a motorcycle with two men on board.

Four soldiers had been looking for Ocampo in her house on March 1. She then decided to spend the night at her sister's house but her assailants found her there the next day.

February 26. Four armed men

Arroyo's countless detractors

THOUSANDS of women government employees who were gathered at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila during a program commemorating International Women's Day booed and heckled Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo—a sure sign of the fake president's growing isolation. She had expected the audience to cheer her microfinancing program, but was shocked to learn that not one of them was a beneficiary. Arroyo then asked her audience if they had received their ₱1,000 peso monthly wage increase. The women roared back, "No!"

Arroyo's spokespersons covered up for her embarrassment by claiming she spoke before the wrong audience. She reportedly gave the event's organizers a thorough tongue-lashing.

armed with M16 rifles attempted to abduct and kill Eduardo Macapagal, 56, in his home in Barangay Bulaus, Masantol, Pampanga. The men withdrew after Macapagal's family refused to let go of him.

The Macapagal family learned that the getaway vehicle used by the four men belonged to the barangay office and that it had been borrowed that day by a certain Sergeant Lumasac. According to the barangay captain, Lumasac was one of the soldiers deployed in Macabebe, Pampanga allegedly to help prevent extrajudicial killings. Anakpawis-Central Luzon said the incident proves the military's direct link to the killings.

AB

American troops strafe Afghan civilians

AT least 16 Afghan civilians were killed and 34 others were wounded after being strafed by American troops last March 4 in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. After a firefight with Afghan guerrillas, the soldiers fired indiscriminately at all vehicles passing through a heavily traveled highway. The troops are part of the US-led invasion coalition.

Associated Press photographers were able to take pictures of the massacres, particularly of US troops shooting at a vehicle with three civilians on board. The photographers' cameras were confiscated and all photos of the shooting were deleted. They were banned from showing any pictures of the event on television or in print.

The photographers protested the destruction of the photographs and intend to file charges against the troops.

Afghans launched mass protests to condemn the massacre. They also condemned the continuing US occupation of their country and the connivance of President Hamid Karzai's puppet regime with the invaders.

Nine more civilians were killed the next day after invasion forces bombed a house in Kapisa, in northern Kabul.

More than 800 Afghan civilians were killed in 2006 by the occupation forces.

Savagery of the 74th IB in San Narciso, Quezon

A Red fighter captured in action in a firefight in San Narciso, Quezon fell victim to the 74th IB's savagery.

Roval Belaryo (Ka Elor), a graduate of the Philippine Normal University, was wounded in a raid by fascist troops in the early hours of November 25, 2006. Comrades carried and hid him and went in search for a boat that could be used to transport Ka Elor and other casualties for treatment. He was missing when his comrades went back for him.

Ka Elor was captured alive by the military and subjected to brutal torture. Peasants who witnessed the torture said that when the wounded Ka Elor refused to answer the fascist brutes' questions, they unleashed their dog on him and cheered and clapped as the vicious animal tore into Ka Elor's flesh and eventually killed him.

To cover up for their grisly crime, the 74th IB later issued a statement that Ka Elor was killed in an encounter last November 29.

It took more than a month of repeated visits to the San Narciso municipal hall before Ka Elor's grieving family could claim his body for burial. The delay was caused by the San Narciso police medico-legal officer's refusal to issue a death certificate detailing severe dog bites as the cause of death. Ka Elor's family was able to claim his body upon the intercession of human rights advocates, but the death certificate made no mention of his cause of death.

Protests hound Bush in visit to Latin America

HUGE protest actions hounded US Pres. George W. Bush during his visit to five Latin American countries in the second week of March.

In Brazil, Bush's first stop, more than 6,000 marched in Sao Paulo to condemn Bush and his policies. In Porto Alegre City, 500 rallyists burned Bush's effigy. In Rio de Janeiro, protesters flung red paint at the US Embassy to symbolize their disgust.

In Colombia, 200 masked students painted anti-US slogans on the walls of the Bogota National University. They called for the abrogation of the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement signed in November 2006 and accused the US of interfering in Colombia's internal affairs by sending \$700 million in military aid annually.

In Buenos Aires, Argentina, Venezuela Pres. Hugo Chavez led an anti-US rally attended by 20,000 people. Chaves condemned the Bush regime's imperialist policies and said the aid promised by Bush was meant for sabotage and to deceive the people.

More than 6,000 people joined a rally in Uruguay. They hurled stones at a McDonald's outlet as Bush arrived at his hotel in a bulletproof car. The march was organized by a federation of labor unions and other groups.

Protest actions were held in front of the US Embassy in Asuncion, Paraguay even if Bush did not visit there.

In Guatemala, indigenous leaders performed a ritual to exorcise evil spirits from their sacred ruins in Iximche after Bush had visited the place. Militant Guatemalans slammed the Bush regime for harassing Latin American migrants in the US and for launching wars of aggression.

In Mexico, the last stop in Bush's visit, hundreds of protestors marched last March 13 in front of the US Embassy. Protestors clashed with riot police, tore down barricades and burned US flags. Police violently dispersed the march.

53 policemen killed in guerrilla raids in India

COMMUNIST Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M) guerrillas killed 53 policemen in a raid on a police station in Rani Bodli, Raipur, Chhattisgarh state last March 14. The casualties consisted of 37 officers and 16 rank and file policemen.

The CPI-M has been fighting a people's war for more than 40 years and now reportedly controls 10 of 16 districts in Chhattisgarh and maintains a presence in 14 other Indian states.

The CPP congratulated the CPI-M on its latest victory, saying the victorious tactical offensive of the Indian comrades last March 14 "reverberates all over the world and inspires all oppressed and exploited peoples to wage revolution and advance their struggles against the reactionary rule and system in their countries."

Hundreds of thousands rally to mark Iraq war anniversary

HUNDREDS of thousands of people in the US and other countries staged rallies starting March 17 to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the US war on Iraq on March 20 and demand an immediate end to the war.

The United for Peace and Justice coalition led marches in various US cities. Thousands attended protest actions in the cities of New York, Washington DC, San Francisco, Portland and others.

About 100,000 joined a protest action in Spain, the largest gathering outside the US. March-rallies were also staged in various European capitals and in Australia.

Meanwhile, the US House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on a proposal to bring home US troops in Iraq by September 1, 2008 or sooner. US Pres. George W. Bush continues to oppose all plans for an immediate stop to the war in Iraq.